



# Listening, learning and doing... *Where we were, are now, and where we're headed* June 19, 2018

**The performance of the Fairview Park City Schools from PreK-12th grade on local, state, and national academic measures has been unacceptable.**

This is the direct result of previous internal factors that eroded curricular alignment to the [Ohio Learning Standards](#) and left teachers without district-level support and coordination. Since 2014, however, significant research, planning, collaboration and work has gone into a dramatic overhaul of teaching and learning throughout the district. Starting in the 2014-2015 school year, the District 1:1 technology initiative was [expanded to grades 1 through 5](#), providing Gilles-Sweet Elementary teachers iPads for each student in their classrooms. In early 2015, a comprehensive [District Strategic Plan](#) was launched, with its primary emphasis on LEARNING. At the start of the 2015-2016 school year, the 1:1 technology initiative was expanded again to include Kindergarten classes and [The Creative Curriculum for Preschool](#) was implemented to align our teaching at the earliest grades to the required [Ohio Early Learning and Development Standards](#). Also, [Everyday Mathematics 4](#) was piloted in Kindergarten through grade 3. Later in 2015, the Student Skills Profile was developed by the District Leadership Team as part of a larger [framework](#) that would provide our students a distinct [Fairview Advantage](#) when competing with students in neighboring communities and around the world. Unfortunately, report card scores were still not making the desired gains in grades 6-12, and it was clear that big, systemic changes were needed at Mayer Middle School and Fairview High School.



In the Spring of 2016, teachers and administrators applied to join the [Summit Learning Program](#) (formerly known as “Summit Basecamp”). Throughout the summer of 2016, the teachers aligned each grade’s curricula with the [Ohio Learning Standards](#) (the first time this had occurred since 2007) and received focused and extended training on the changes in teaching strategies, assessment methods, and grading philosophy that would emphasize a [more personalized approach](#). These changes were launched in the Fall of 2016 in the core classes of Math, English Language Arts, Science and Social Studies in grades 6 and 9 and in Math only in grades 7 and 8. Also during the 2016-2017 school year, [Everyday Mathematics 4](#) was fully implemented in Kindergarten through grade 5 and the [Collaborative Classroom](#) program was launched for English Language Arts in grades 1 through 5.



In the Spring of 2017, the district launched the inaugural [Fairview Innovation Challenge](#), a two-part competition and exhibition of student innovation, creativity, and application of the design thinking process, and curated student electronic portfolios of their cumulative learning in the Fairview Schools.

During the 2017-2018 school year, the use of Summit Learning was expanded to all core classes in grades 6-10, with some teachers of elective classes also choosing to use to the [Personalized Learning Platform](#) (often referred to as the PLP) in the high school. Also, Fairview High School was [approved by the College Board](#) and launched the [AP Capstone program](#), designed to “equip students with the independent research, collaborative teamwork, and communication skills that are increasingly valued by colleges.” Most recently, the [Innovation Challenge Showcase](#) of exemplary student work was dramatically expanded in the Spring of 2018.

Change takes time, patience, trust, persistence and communication to be successful. To that end, the District has facilitated many informational meetings, coffee chats, training sessions, classroom visitation opportunities, technical support meetings, individual and family appointments, and open office hours. The majority of the frustration, confusion and misinformation seems to center around the implementation of the Summit Learning tool in the middle school and high school. Here are some of the things we’ve heard overall and changes we’ve made to improve our implementation and communication of all district initiatives as we move forward:

<b>What we've heard and learned...</b>	<b>What we've done or are doing to improve...</b>
Improve the consistency of implementation of curricular programs across grade levels	Continue to focus dedicated meeting time on individual grade-level and grade-band (e.g. K-3) meetings to discuss and refine instructional delivery methods (2016 and beyond)
Increase the level of student data privacy at all levels	Review all systems, programs, platforms and use agreements to assure and increase the security and privacy of student data. Limit access of district technology for students to academic purposes (Fall 2018)
Strike a balance between using technology resources and proven, traditional methods	Continue the encouragement of reading for both enjoyment and learning, Socratic Seminar, individual and group projects, large-group direct instruction (when appropriate), student portfolio development, field trips, Science Fair, co-curriculars such as Math Club/Competitions, <i>Pen Ohio</i> , Builders Club <i>Because I Said I Would</i> , etc. (Ongoing)
Middle school in particular lacks advanced level opportunities for gifted and high performing students. There are too few electives.	Teachers grades 2-12 now participate in professional learning on attributes of gifted students and means to address their needs. Advanced level options have been created in core subjects, Grades 6-9 and enhanced Grades 10 and up. More gifted students will now be served/more appropriately (2017 and ongoing)

<b><i>What we've heard and learned...</i></b>	<b><i>What we've done or are doing to improve...</i></b>
Increase the communication and collaboration among teachers at all four levels (Primary, Intermediate, Middle and High) to improve vertical alignment of curriculum PreK-12	Increase the cross-building collaborations and trainings on the various curricular implementations to increase internal teacher knowledge, understanding and articulation of instruction (2017 and ongoing)
Establish clearer deadlines with projects and assignments	More clearly communicate timelines and expectations for completion of work. Post clear deadlines for students and apply consequences for late/missing work (2018 and ongoing)
Expand the Operation Advantage class to 8th grade and refine the 6-7-8 continuity and structure of the courses	Operation Advantage 8 was developed and curricular writing and group collaboration time provided (2018) Launch OA 8 and coordinate curriculum and activities 6-10 (2018 and beyond)
Students, parents and some teachers are still struggling to understand the concepts of mastery learning and how it impacts grading	Provide additional internal and external training on what mastery learning is, how it is implemented in a successful setting, and how to assess a student's point-in-time and summary learning (2018-2019)
Students are using cell phones and computers to cheat, play games, etc.	Build mentoring and instruction lessons around appropriate use of technology for educational purposes. Expand conversations between teachers and students that "Just because you can, doesn't mean you should."
The projects students are assigned do not always align with the content they are learning or the Ohio Learning Standards for the grade level and class they are taking	Provide more staff training on the development of high-quality performance assessments and projects. Review and revise or replace the projects assigned to students at all grade levels (2018-2019)
Students are not good at note-taking and should have limited access to using notes when taking tests/content assessments	Refine, reinforce with students, and communicate better with parents the developmental progression of learning how to take notes, and the gradual weaning from dependency on notes (ongoing)
Students should not be able to take assessments over and over/There is a misunderstanding of the philosophy and effective practice of mastery learning and grading, as well as misconception regarding when/how/why retakes occur	Review, expand and increase consistency around taking assessments more than once - assuring interventions and interactions between assessment re-takes. Clarify how the number of assessment retakes can be readily monitored. Clarify when and how teachers assess and redress the need for retakes. (ongoing)
There continues to be parental confusion over what is really going on in the classrooms.	Continue to provide drop-in classroom visits and scheduled conferences with teachers and teams any time throughout the school year Hold quarterly exhibitions of student work (2017 and beyond)
Students are driven to submit work just to "check it off" without concern for their learning or the quality of the product or work done	Hold specific mentoring sessions and classroom conversations (build a culture) emphasizing the quality of work over the quantity or speed of the work (Fall 2018 and beyond)
21st Century education seems so different to parents and community members - why does it have to be different from "what I did"	Provide additional trainings and information sessions that focus on sharing, explaining and discussing the research, educational trends, and best practices around 21st Century learning (Fall 2018 and beyond)
Students are spending too much time on basic knowledge-level activities and not enough time analyzing, applying and synthesizing the concepts being taught	Provide teacher training on the development, use and assessment of high-quality project-based learning activities. Help students manage time and work efforts to focus more on higher-level learning activities (2017 and beyond)
Students need more time meeting 1-on-1 with teachers for mentorship on both academic and non-academic support	Continue to create and restructure the use of mentoring time to assure 1-on-1 mentor-mentee interaction each week (Fall 2017 and beyond)
A greater emphasis on the development of personal and interpersonal skills are needed to help students meet the challenges of the 21st Century	Develop and deliver grade-level and building-wide themes for student skill-building (e.g. career exploration) and social-emotional development (e.g. integrity, persistence, work ethic, kindness, etc.) (Fall 2018)
Increase student engagement with the content being learned, with fellow students, and with teachers	Focus on developing high-quality projects and real-world and service learning challenges that require students to exercise both individual and group problem-solving skills (Ongoing)
Access to and simplicity of information is critical in helping parents and the community understand the tremendous changes to teaching and learning in the 21st Century	Provide parents with targeted trainings, both in-person and online, create more podcasts and videos, and push more information through social media in smaller bites (Fall 2018 and beyond)
Increased opportunities for students to use their creativity and choice will increase their engagement and retention of learning	Encourage the use of multiple, choice-based options for students to demonstrate what it is they've learned and are able to do as a way to demonstrate mastery of concepts (Ongoing)
Students need to reconnect with the "joy" of learning	Increase the connectivity between the content students are learning at all levels and the world around them. Design and refine community-related projects that apply the learning in truly meaningful ways.

Continue to communicate and clarify the expectations around the completion of student work outside of the classroom and the school day

Discuss with both students and parents that student learning extends beyond the school day and that "homework" occurs every day in one fashion or another (ongoing)